

REMARKS

Claims 158-159, 161, 163-168, 170-200, 211-213, 223-229, 231-232 and 248-257 are pending upon entry of this amendment. Claims 160, 162, 169, 201-210, 230 and 233-247 are canceled. Claims 248-257 are newly-added. Claim 158 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claims 160, 162 and 169 therein. Claim 224 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claim 230 therein. Other claims have been amended to address other issues, including claim dependency, as set forth above. Applicants reserve the right to argue the independent validity of the dependent claims set forth herein. Reconsideration, a withdrawal of all rejections and a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

The Office indicates that the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 8, 2006 fails to provide legible copies of cited foreign patent documents, non-patent literature documents or that portion which caused it to be listed, and all other information which caused it to be listed. In particular, the Office indicates that the following cited documents on the above-mentioned IDS were not cited: 21, 24, 28, 30, 31, 34, 37, 66, 70, 73 and 74. Applicants enclose copies of these references along with this response.

Claims 158-168, 170-175, 179-183, 188 and 193 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,401,681 to Fowler (“Fowler”). Claims 158, 162-163, 194 and 197-199 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,622,053 to Ryden (“Ryden”). Applicants respectfully traverse each and every aspect of these rejections.

Independent Claims 158 and 224 have been amended to recite the restricting member being present as a clip, as recited by now-canceled Claim 169. Accordingly, none of Fowler and Ryan anticipates the claims as now set forth. A withdrawal of these rejections is therefore respectfully solicited.

The Office makes a number of rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 169 and 176-178 are rejected as being unpatentable over Ryden in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,382,463 to Meshberg (“Meshberg”). Claims 184-187 and 189-192 are rejected as being unpatentable over Fowler in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,464,708 to Marx (“Marx”). Claims 194 and 196-199 are rejected as being unpatentable over Fowler in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,261,274 to Arghyris (“Arghyris”). Claims 194-195 and 200 are rejected as being unpatentable over Fowler in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,899,200 to McNary (“McNary”). Applicants respectfully traverse each and every aspect of this rejection.

Meshberg has been cited as allegedly teaching the clip recited by now-canceled Claim 169. Accordingly, these remarks will focus on Meshberg.

If we leave aside whether the combination of Meshberg and Ryden is justifiable, this alleged finding of obviousness is based on the Office's argument that Meshberg discloses a clip (point 37). In particular, the Office considers the projection 915 which fits into recess 917 (Figure 5) to be a clip. As stated in Meshberg at col. 3, ll. 59-62:

"the engagement of a projection 915 with a recess 917 acts to prevent the actuator 6 from being depressed, thereby locking the actuator 6 against accidental discharge".

Contrary to the Office's position, there is no disclosure in Meshberg of the projection 915 having any attributes of a clip. The projection 915 simply fits in the recess 917.

The projection 915 is therefore not a "clip", as required by the claims. As a result an element of the claimed invention is entirely missing, i.e., is not taught or suggested by the prior art. A withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully solicited.

None of the other secondary references cited by the Office, namely Marx, Arghyris, or McNary, teach or suggest the invention as now claimed, in combination with the other cited references. A withdrawal of these rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is therefore respectfully solicited.

The points of the Office Action being addressed in full, a Notice of Allowability is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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